

**MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
OFF-ROAD VEHICLE ADVISORY WORKGROUP (ORVAW)**

**MEETING MINUTES  
May 9, 2012**

**Michigan United Conservation Clubs  
2101 Wood Street, Lansing, Michigan 48912**

**PRESENT FOR THE WORKGROUP**

Thomas Dunn, Chair  
Tim Kobasic  
Amy Trotter  
John Chad  
Greg Yager  
Pat Brower

**ABSENT FOR THE WORKGROUP**

Jim Faiella

**PRESENT FOR STAFF**

Ron Olson, Chief, Parks and Recreation Division (PRD)  
Jim Radabaugh, PRD  
Steve Kubisiak, PRD  
Jason Fleming, PRD  
Corporal John Morey, Law Enforcement Division (LED)

**PRESENT FOR FOREST SERVICE**

Kristen Thrall, Recreation Program Coordinator, Huron-Manistee National Forest

**PUBLIC ATTENDEES**

Bruce Suydam, ATV Off-Road Club  
Sue Thrushman, ATV Off-Road Club  
Lynda Chilstrom, Polaris  
Jan Rantimaki, Polaris  
Steve Scofes, Scofes & Associates (S & A)/Polaris  
Sam Boumis, S & A/Polaris  
Lewis Shuler, Cycle Conservation Club of Michigan

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

**Chair Dunn** called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. The workgroup, staff, and audience introduced themselves.

The May 9, 2012 Agenda was presented and reviewed.

**Tim Kobasic moved seconded by Amy Trotter to approve the agenda as presented.  
Motion unanimously carried**

**MINUTES**

The March 7, 2012 Minutes were presented and reviewed.

**Amy Trotter moved seconded by Tim Kobasic to approve the agenda as presented. Motion unanimously carried**

**BUSINESS ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION****Updates**

**Chief Olson** reported the trail program reorganization that began April 15 is ongoing, and division and field staff are assimilating. He attended a senate appropriation hearing and provided testimony in favor of a fee increase and how the fee would be used noting over 500 miles of trail have been added to the system since 2006. Testimony was well received but legislators are hearing different stories from the user groups in terms of what is an appropriate fee. Neither the house or senate budgets included an increase. **Chief Olson** encouraged the groups to spend some time with the Michigan Snowmobile Association and establish a unified front. He referenced the statewide trails marketing plan presented to the Michigan Snowmobile and Trails Advisory Council (MSTAC). Maia Stevens will be invited to the next meeting. He noted a recent article in *Biking Bis* ([www.bikingbis.com](http://www.bikingbis.com)), ranking Michigan as the No. 1 rails-to-trails state.

**ORV Definitions**

**Mr. Jan Rantimaki, Director Government Relations, Polaris**, is a Michigan native and rides the trail system. He presented a power-point presentation on Polaris products noting ATV sales are down some 60 percent and the RZR is the only vehicle segment that is growing. He likes tight winding trails and said he does not want to widen Michigan's trail system but would like to be able to ride the 50 inch RZR on some ATV trails. Polaris would like to 1) update Michigan's ATV definitions, 2) have specific trail rules established at the local level, and 3) promote long term health for ORVs in Michigan.

There was considerable discussion and it was the consensus of the workgroup that there is no need to change ATV definitions and that there is ample riding opportunity in Michigan to accommodate vehicles wider than 50 inches.

**Amy Trotter** said MUCC does not have a concern with changing ORV definitions and would support.

**Chair Dunn** invited the Polaris representatives to ride the ORV routes in the Baldwin area.

**Chief Olson** noted the trail planning process is underway and it would be good to have industry at the table.

**Chair Dunn** thanked Mr. Rantimaki.

**Statewide Trail Network Plan**

**Jim Radabaugh** reported the MSTAC is charged with developing a Statewide Trail Network Plan by December 2012. He distributed an outline noting the workgroup is responsible for developing the ORV Chapter of the plan. He suggested the workgroup begin by reviewing the existing

**ORV Management Plan** to see how it fits with the outline, and provide input to Rob Katona. Mr. Katona will coordinate chapter development with Chair Dunn.

### **Legislation Update**

**Tim Kobasic** reported SB 1020 has been introduced. The bill would allow a county board of commissioners to adopt an ordinance allowing ORV operation on the maintained portion of highways in their county. The bill also provides for a free riding day. He referred to SB 1021 that would require an annual increase in the tax paid by the state to each county in which the state owns certain lands, and revise the formula for assessing a parcel's value. He referred to SB 248 that would require the DNR to do a strategic plan for land acquisition and disposal, and prohibit the DNR from acquiring more than 4.6 million acres of land. **Mr. Kobasic** expressed concern with some of the current wording in the bill. **Amy Trotter** said MUCC is watching this bill closely and noted there is an amendment pending.

**Dick Ranney** reported HB 5612, HB 5613, HB5614, and HB5615 were enrolled today. The bills are sponsored by Representative Huuki. Among other things, this bill package would prohibit counties from charging a fee to use roads under their jurisdiction, allow ORV use on road shoulders, allow a county board of commissioners to adopt an ordinance allowing ORV operation on the maintained portion of highways in their county, change definition of ORV license to ORV trail permit, change ORV fund distribution formula, require DNR to waive event permit requirements for ORV events under seventy persons, define ORV events as low-intensity impact on the ORV trail system, transfer gas tax revenue from the Recreation Improvement Fund to the ORV account, recognize 40 hour law enforcement certification for ORV, change ORV route definition, provide for assumption of risk, and modify penalties for operating an ORV without a helmet.

**Mr. Ranney** also reported HB 4925 has been introduced. The bill would permit all counties statewide to pass ordinances allowing for ORV operation on roadways under their jurisdiction.

### **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### **Drummond Island Update**

**Pat Brower** reported the Drummond Island Management Plan is going through the final review and revision phase. The plan will be released later this year.

#### **Legislative Ride Update**

A Lower Peninsula legislative ride is scheduled for June 11 in Baldwin. Two legislative rides are planned for the Upper Peninsula; one at the Baraga Plains trail in June and the other in Marquette County in August.

### **STAFF REPORTS**

#### **Ishpeming to Republic / Directors Order**

**Steve Kubisiak** distributed a map and provided background on the Iron Ore Heritage Trail. The west portion of the trail from Ishpeming to Republic is proposed for multiple-use including ORV riding for vehicles less than 65 inches in width. This item is being brought before the ORVAW for information. The DNR intends to pursue a Directors Order that is necessary in order to enforce the proposed vehicle restriction.

**UP Destination Trail Sign Pilot Project**

**Steve Kubisiak** reported that Rob Katona has been tasked by Chief Olson to develop a destination trail sign prototype for trails on the west end of the Upper Peninsula.

**Bridge Construction Projects**

**Steve Kubisiak** reported two bridges on the Little Manistee Trail and one on the Denton trail are being replaced. The projects are funded with National Recreational Trail Program (RTP) and ORV funds. All of the projects are scheduled to be complete by June 30.

**PUBLIC APPEARANCE**

**Dick Ranney** stated the ORV legislation has a slim chance of passing this year as we head to the lame duck session. He encouraged stakeholders to voice their support

**Pat Brower** asked about the status of a route proposal in the Denton area. He was referred to Paige Perry and Amanda Matelski.

**John Chad** motioned to adjourn seconded by **Tim Kobasic**.

**Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.**

**NEXT MEETING**

August 8, 2012

Michigan United Conservation Club, 2101 Wood Street, Lansing, Michigan 48912